

ABSTRACT

A cushion that includes a cushioning element. The cushioning element has a number of substantially parallel elongate columns formed in a soft, easily deformable elastic or visco-elastic cushioning media. The columns are configured so that when a force is applied to the cushioning element in a direction that is generally parallel to the longitudinal axes of the columns, the cushioning element will yield by compressability or deformability of the cushioning media, bucklability of the walls of the columns, or a combination of both. In particular, the walls of columns which are located beneath a protruberance on an object being cushioned tend to buckle, permitting the cushioning element to conform to the shape of the cushioned object while evenly distributing a supporting force across the contact area of the cushioned object and avoiding pressure peaks. The preferred cushioning media is a gelatinous elastomer or gelatinous viscoelastomer. Various configurations of cushioning elements, including sidewall supports, are disclosed.